



**Wisconsin Association of School Boards Meeting  
Tuesday, October 19, 2004**

People in attendance

Pat Lund, WASB, Director, Region 12  
Steve Hintzman, WASB, Director of Legal and Policy Services  
Annette Taris, WASB Information Services Coordinator  
Sheri Krause, WASB Lobbyist  
Ken Cole, WASB Executive Director  
Bobbi Retzlaff, WisDOT BOP  
Jonquil Johnston, WisDOT BOP

1. Overview of WisDOT's meeting purpose and WisDOT's long-range plan by WisDOT staff:  
The meeting began at 1:00. Bobbi Retzlaff gave an overview of WisDOT's upcoming long-range transportation plan, *Connections 2030* (C2030). WisDOT is currently seeking input on transportation planning issues from stakeholder groups and larger Wisconsin cities. Plan alternatives should be available for public comment in July of 2005. The plan is scheduled to be completed in 2006.
2. Gathering of input from the Wisconsin Association of School Boards (WASB): Discussion focused on the following issues:
  - a. Serving All School Districts  
WASB staff members talked about the growing number of "small, but necessary" school districts. Of 426 school districts in Wisconsin, 75% have less than 1,000 students.  
  
The WASB staff members noted gaps in the transportation system create barriers for school districts to cooperate. Many small school districts, particularly in rural parts of the state, are separated by hills, valleys, and other geographical formations. Consolidation of school districts is often not acceptable to local communities because of long bus rides for children. Improved transportation infrastructure, such as bridges, could alleviate some of the issues surrounding "small, but necessary" school districts.
  - b. Siting of School Districts Along Transportation Facilities  
WASB and WisDOT staff members discussed the concept of corridors in *Connections 2030*. WASB staff members noted that WisDOT's corridors will impact how growth occurs and where schools are located.

WASB staff members noted that school districts are reluctant to use condemnation or eminent domain to acquire land for new facilities. Instead, school districts tend to

buy land where parcels are available, which is not necessarily where it makes the most sense to build a school facility. If school districts engage in long range planning, it is typically a timeline of five years (the time it takes for newborns to become school age).

School districts do some forecasting, using numbers from the UW-Madison Applied Population Laboratory. WASB staff members would like to encourage more long range planning and coordination within and between school districts, as well as with local and state government.

They noted it is helpful to school districts to know and understand local governments' and state agencies' long range plans. There was some discussion on how the state's comprehensive planning law encourages such coordination.

c. Congestion Around School Facilities

WASB staff members spoke of a need for improved congestion management and access management at intersections and interchanges near schools. They stated new schools are traffic generators and often draw new households to an area, creating even more traffic.

d. Population Changes

WASB staff observed population migration trends in Wisconsin. Many rural and small towns in Wisconsin have lost population or have experienced little to no population growth. Population migration trends are another factor of the rising number of "small, but necessary" school districts.

d. Transportation for Specialized Populations

WASB staff members noted a concern to continue to provide adequate specialized transportation for disabled students. Such students need to be able to access both academic and extra-curricular activities. Along with the need for specialized transportation, WASB staff members noted smart technologies used on the public transportation system (message boards, signs, etc) should have assistive technology enabling students with disabilities to interpret the messages.

e. Safe Routes to School

Many children are bused to school because due to a lack of sidewalks or transportation alternatives. Many subdivisions do not have sidewalks. The WASB staff members advocate increased public investment in pedestrian facilities and safe routes to school.

f. Fuel Economy

WASB staff stated school districts are concerned about the rising cost of gasoline and the cost impact on school bus budgets. The WASB staff members voiced their support for safe transportation alternatives to busing.